

Butterflies in Albania, September, 1988 (Lepidoptera : Hesperioidea & Papilionoidea)

David E. GASKIN

Samenvatting. Dagvlinders in Albanië, september 1988 (Lepidoptera : Hesperioidea & Papilionoidea)

Tijdens de eerste week van september 1988 kon de auteur op verschillende plaatsen in Albanië dagvlindersoorten waarnemen. Na een korte beschrijving van het landschap geeft hij een lijst van de 27 geobserveerde soorten.

Résumé. Rhopalocères d'Albanie, en septembre 1988 (Lepidoptera : Hesperioidea & Papilionoidea)

Durant la première semaine de septembre 1988, l'auteur a eu l'occasion de récolter des rhopalocères en Albanie. Après une courte description du biotope, l'auteur donne une liste des 27 espèces observées.

Gaskin, D.E. : Department of Zoology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2W1.

Introduction

The bibliography on the entomology of Albania by KÖNIGSMANN (1962) contains some 450 articles, the great majority published before the Second World War. Studies of importance on the occurrence and distribution of the butterfly fauna include those by REBEL (1918), REBEL & ZERNY (1934) and others. The results of a major expedition by the Institut für Pflanzenschutz-Forschung, Berlin (D.D.R.) in the early 1960s have been published in part by FRIESE & KÖNIGSMANN (1962), DANIEL & FRIESE (1966) and others, but none of this work to date dealt with the butterfly fauna. Very little appears to have been published about Albanian butterflies during the last 40-50 years other than a few papers in Albanian, e.g. by MISJA & KURRIZI (1984). The author had the good fortune to obtain permission to visit the P.S.R. Albania between 1-8 September, 1988 in relation to other matters, but during the course of travel within the vicinity of Tiranë and several southern and central districts I was able to accrue sight records of 27 species and in some areas obtain specimens, although collecting was much restricted by the circumstances.

Albania is mountainous except for the coastal plain from the Gulf of Vlorë to Lake Shkoder at the northwestern border with Yugoslavia. This plain is narrow except where it extends some 30-40 km inland towards Tiranë in the vicinity of latitude 41°25'N and again just south of the Shkumbin River, to form the plain around Lushnjë. The former makes a convenient dividing line between the northern and southern halves of the country. Until the postwar period much of this low-lying region was malarial swamp and marshland. It is now intensively agricultural, supporting sunflowers, grains and diverse vegetable crops as well as cattle farms. In most of the southwest the mountains of the Kuvelesh region touch the sea; there is another small area of plain to the east of Sarandë. Many of the vineyards are located in these hilly regions of the south, as well as olive and citrus plantations, mainly on terraces with an extensive system of irrigation. In the southern hills the typical

garrigue encountered is very similar to that found in Greece, and goats and sheep are grazed on the rough hill country. About 35% of the country is forested, much of it within national park areas. Watersheds are protected from deforestation and the subsequent erosion which is so obvious in other parts of the southern Balkans. As the western alpine passes are crossed, one climbs into very distinctive belts of Balkan Pine, and montane oaks. The planting of young pines, raised in regional nurseries, in deforested or partly clear-cut areas is regularly practiced in the course of reclamation. The role of forests in modifying regional climates and the hydrological regime in surrounding areas is clearly understood and as a result the exploitation of the forested zones appeared to be much more rational than in some of the neighbouring nations. Nevertheless, the clearing of more hill-country land for agriculture goes on, as part of the effort to sustain self-sufficiency in domestic food production and have it keep pace with population growth.

The general impression gained, from a relatively limited number of short survey opportunities late in the summer, in a year of almost continuous drought, was that the populations of some butterflies at least seemed to be in good condition in Albania. Most striking was the high density of butterflies in urban settings, almost certainly as a result of the practice of establishing large flower beds in all towns. Old-fashioned aromatic French marigolds were the most abundant plant in these. Only in Durrës were butterflies scarce on these beds; from the smell, it seemed that those along the hotel strip had been recently sprayed. Fortunately this did not seem to be a common practice, pesticides being given priority use in agriculture, not municipal horticulture.

Observations were made at the following localities (Fig. 1). The spelling of names conforms with the standard map of the P.S.R.A. distributed by the Book Distribution Enterprise, Tiranë : Apollonia*, Butrint*, Borsh, Durrës, Fier, Gjirokastër, Himarë, Kavajë, Krujë, Ksamil*, Llogarasë Pass, Rina, Sarandë, Tepelenë*, Tiranë*, and Vlorë. An asterisk indicates those where some collecting was done. Daytime temperatures ranged from 29-38°C during the whole period, skies were usually cloudless. Drought conditions had prevailed throughout Albania since the spring of 1988.

Results

Hesperiidae

Carcharodus alceae (ESPER, 1780): Berat (abundant on tracks), Durrës, Fier, Ksamil, Rina, Tiranë, Vlorë. Abundant on flower beds in all towns.

Gegenes pumilio (HOFFMANNSEGG, 1804): Apollonia (common on dry banks and stone walls), Butrint (common), Fier (one specimen on flowers), Tiranë (few specimens on flower beds).

Papilionidae

Papilio machaon LINNAEUS, 1758: Berat (common), 11 km N. of Fier, Fier, Ksamil, Tiranë (common).

Iphiclides podalirius (LINNAEUS, 1758): Apollonia (common around fruit trees), Berat, Tiranë (common in municipal gardens), Vlorë.

Pieridae

Pieris rapae (LINNAEUS, 1758): Berat, Butrint, Durrës, Fier, Ksamil, Rina, Tiranë.

Pontia (daplidice) edusa (FABRICIUS, 1777): Apollonia (common), Berat (common in rough pastures), Butrint, Ksamil, Sarandë.

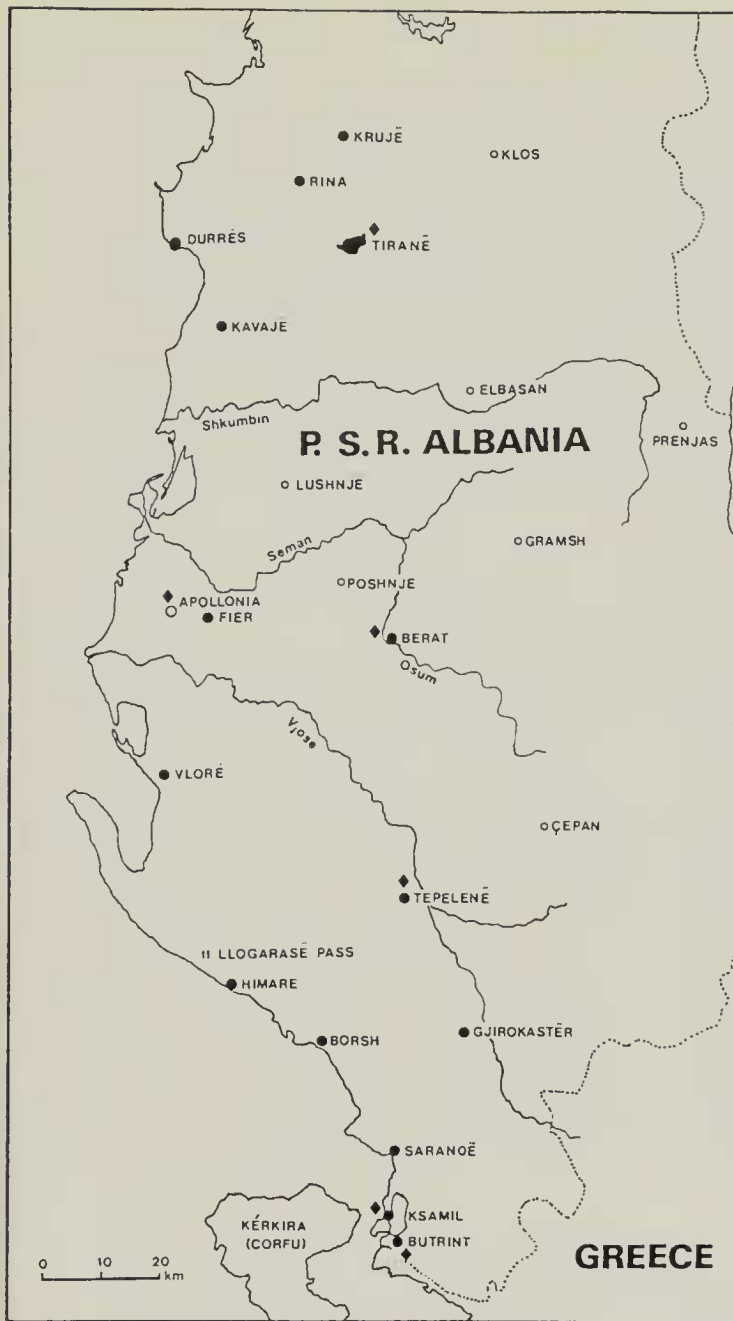


Fig. 1 : The People's Socialist Republic of Albania : Main towns and rivers of the central and southern region. Localities in solid black refer to those where sight records were collected between 1-8 September, 1988. Solid diamond indicates those where some collecting was done.

Leptidea sinapis (LINNAEUS, 1758): Ksamil (common), Llogarasë Pass (1150 m), Rina (common on flower beds), Sarandë, Tiranë.

Colias crocea (FOURCROY, 1785): Berat (common on municipal flower beds), Borsh, Butrint (common), Durrës (2 only), Krujë, Ksamil (common), Llogarasë Pass, Rina, Tiranë (common on flower beds).

Nymphalidae

Danaus chrysippus (LINNAEUS, 1758): 10 km N of Borsh, Himarë, Kavajë, Sarandë, Tiranë. Single specimens were seen on each occasion, always on or flying over municipal flower beds. This species was first recorded from Albania in 1979 and also in 1982 and 1988 by K. MISJA (LUQUET & MISJA 1989).

- Vanessa atalanta* (LINNAEUS, 1758): Apollonia, Berat, Borsh, Gjirokastër, Tepelenë. All single specimens, basking on walls.
- Vanessa cardui* (LINNAEUS, 1758): Berat, Fier, Ksamil, Sarandë, Tiranë, Vlorë. Single specimens, all tattered.
- Polygonia egea* (CRAMER, 1775): Apollonia, Berat, Gjirokaster, 5 km N of Tepelenë, Vlorë.
- Argynnis pandora* (DENIS & SCHIFFERMÜLLER, 1775): Berat, Tepelenë (common, nectaring from a cluster of ? *Oenanthe* sp., up to 2 m in height), Vlorë.
- Melitaea trivia* (DENIS & SCHIFFERMÜLLER, 1775): Ksamil (common, but scattered on dry citrus terraces. All specimens bright orange with much reduced upperwing spotting).
- Brintesia circe* (FABRICIUS, 1775): Butrint, Himarë (single specimens).
- Hipparchia* sp.: Butrint (single specimen sitting on wall, sight record only). J. COUTSIS suggested that this could have been either *H. volgensis* (MAZochin-PORSHNJAKOW, 1952) or *H. aristaeus senthes* (FRUHSTORFER, 1908).
- Hipparchia syriaca* (STAUDINGER, 1871): Butrint (single specimen in wooded area at archaeological site, flying up and down path, sunning on rocks or sitting briefly on tree trunks).
- Hipparchia statilinus* (HUFNAGEL, 1766): Llogarasë Pass (single specimen, very worn, sitting on rocks beside main coast road at about 1,300 m), not taken. Identity confirmed from photograph by J. COUTSIS.
- Kirinia roxelana* (CRAMER, 1777): Rina (sitting on tree trunks in shade), Vorsh (one worn specimen on roadside tree).
- Maniola jurtina* (LINNAEUS, 1758): Apollonia (worn females in dry field), Ksamil, Tepelenë (visiting flowers), Tiranë (a few on municipal flower beds).
- Coenonympha pamphilus* (LINNAEUS, 1758): Ksamil (in long lush grass, specimens with dark margins, not common), Rina (few specimens on flower beds), Tiranë.

Lycaenidae

- Lycaena thersamon* (ESPER, 1784): Ksamil (1 fresh male seen and taken).
- Lycaena phlaeas* (LINNAEUS, 1761): Berat (common), Ksamil (common), Rina, Tiranë. Both first and second brood (dark) forms were recorded in Berat and Ksamil.
- Celastrina argiolus* (LINNAEUS, 1758): Borsh, Butrint (common around ivy banks on ruins), frequently basking, Tepelenë (common on ? *Hebe* sp.).
- Lampides boeticus* (LINNAEUS, 1767): Durrës (common on flower beds), Fier, Krujë, Sarandë, Tiranë, Vlorë.
- Aricia agestis* (DENIS & SCHIFFERMÜLLER, 1775): Apollonia (common), Berat (abundant, flying in scores over dry herbage under widely-spaced pine trees around the Berat fortress), Butrint (common), Fier, Ksamil, Rina.
- Polyommatus icarus* (ROTTEMBURG, 1775): Apollonia (common on dry verges), Berat (common in one area near fortress with many thistles and a small stream), Durrës, Krujë, Fier, Ksamil (common, with remarkable range of size among the males, alar lengths ranging from 10 to 16 mm). The smallest specimens were on dry citrus terraces, the largest in long grass near a small stream), Rina, Tiranë.

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